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future of the
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A Vision for the Future of the Missouri River Country

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Report from the
Governor's Roundtable
on Fort Peck Lake
and the Missouri River

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March 26, 1992





**State of Montana
Office of the Governor
Helena, Montana 59620
406-444-3111**

STAN STEPHENS
GOVERNOR

March 26, 1992

Dear Governor's Roundtable Participants:

I am pleased to present the final report from the Governor's Roundtable on Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River. "A Vision for the Future of the Missouri River Country" has been updated to reflect the status of the several initiatives which, together, we've undertaken.

We're making encouraging progress on several fronts. The solidarity and commitment Eastern Montanans have shown has been a vital part of our success to date.

I expect the new Fort Peck Lake Master Plan to substantially reflect our needs and priorities. The Corps' new openness in developing the Annual Operating Plan is a most welcome and encouraging sign.

The General Accounting Office's favorable analysis of the Upper Basin States' position on water management should help our case before the federal courts. Whether through negotiation or litigation, fairer water management should ultimately be reflected in the Corps' new Master Water Control Manual.

I support the concept of a regional coordinating body which was the major new recommendation made by the roundtable. To be successful, this must start as a local initiative with sufficient widespread interest to give it energy and momentum. It should have a clearly defined purpose and agenda. These cannot be crafted in Helena, but must be developed by those who best know what they want to achieve.

My administration is available to work with you, if you decide to go forward with this regional coordination body. Karen Barclay Fagg, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, will be your contact at 444-6699.

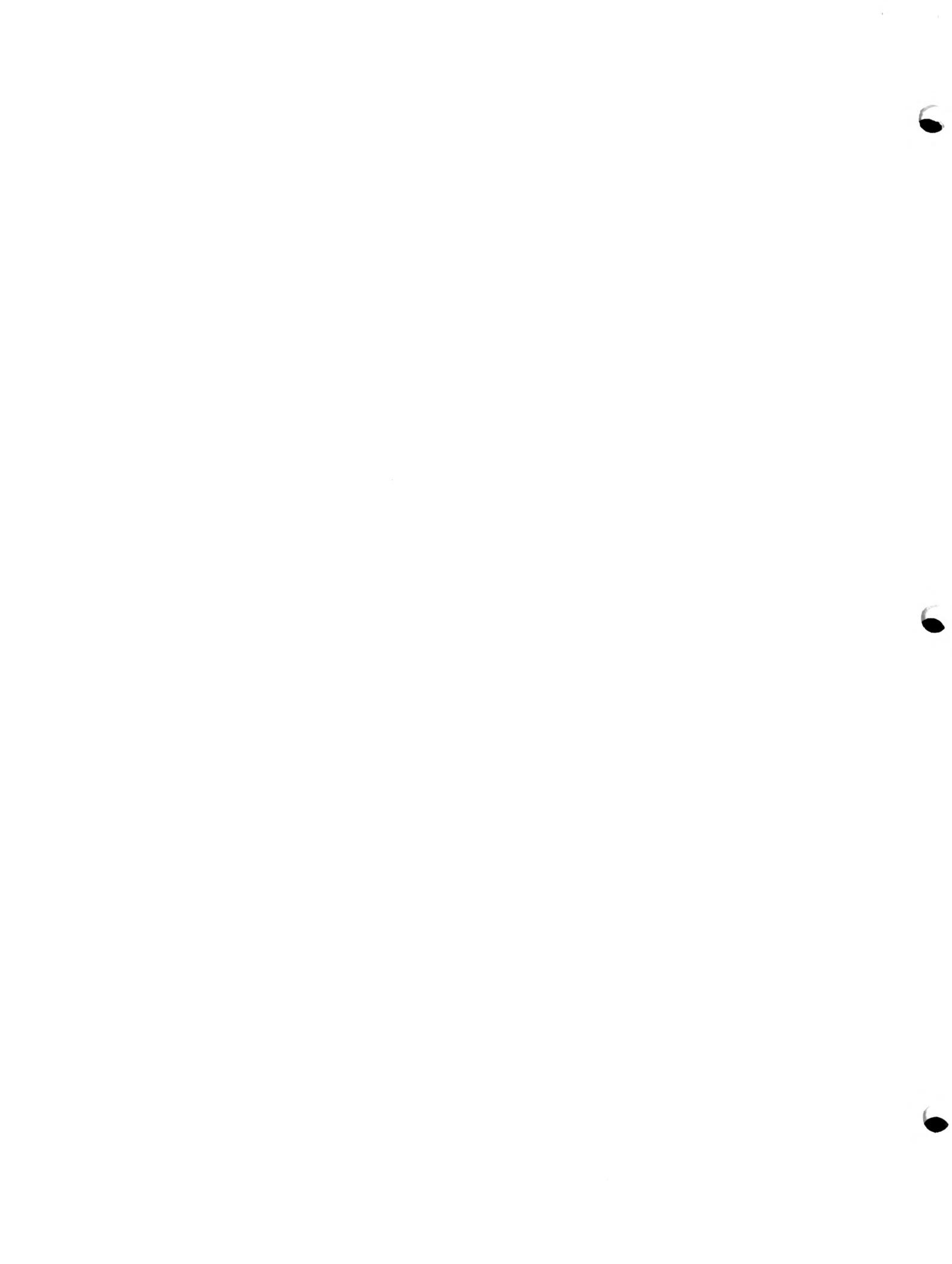
Thank you again for participating in the roundtable and for your tireless efforts to make the most of our opportunities in Missouri River Country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stan Stephens".

STAN STEPHENS
Governor

SS:na



Historical Perspective

Life on the Montana plains has always been hard. Since white settlement, the struggle for prosperity has seen several brief bursts of growth. But depression, recessions, severe winters and periods of drought have taken their toll over the years.

Today, Eastern Montana is still one of the most sparsely populated regions of the United States and its population is declining.

The Fort Peck Project, despite all of its promise and potential to be a long-term positive factor, instead contributed another boom and bust cycle—boom during construction and bust as the construction-based towns disappeared and the promised benefits never materialized.

Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River are the dominant features of the region now known in travel literature as Missouri River Country. Properly developed and marketed, they have the potential to turn the region's decline toward a more positive trend.

This is not a new revelation. A review of the historic record from 1945 shows a remarkable consistency with the findings of the 1991 Governor's Roundtable. Consider these quotes from THE FORT

PECK LAKE MASTER RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, September 1946...

"...Development in the area of all potential activities will provide the principal source of recreation for the people in the eastern Montana region, which is almost entirely devoid of recreational facilities and in addition will provide recreational facilities for tourists from adjoining and distant localities."

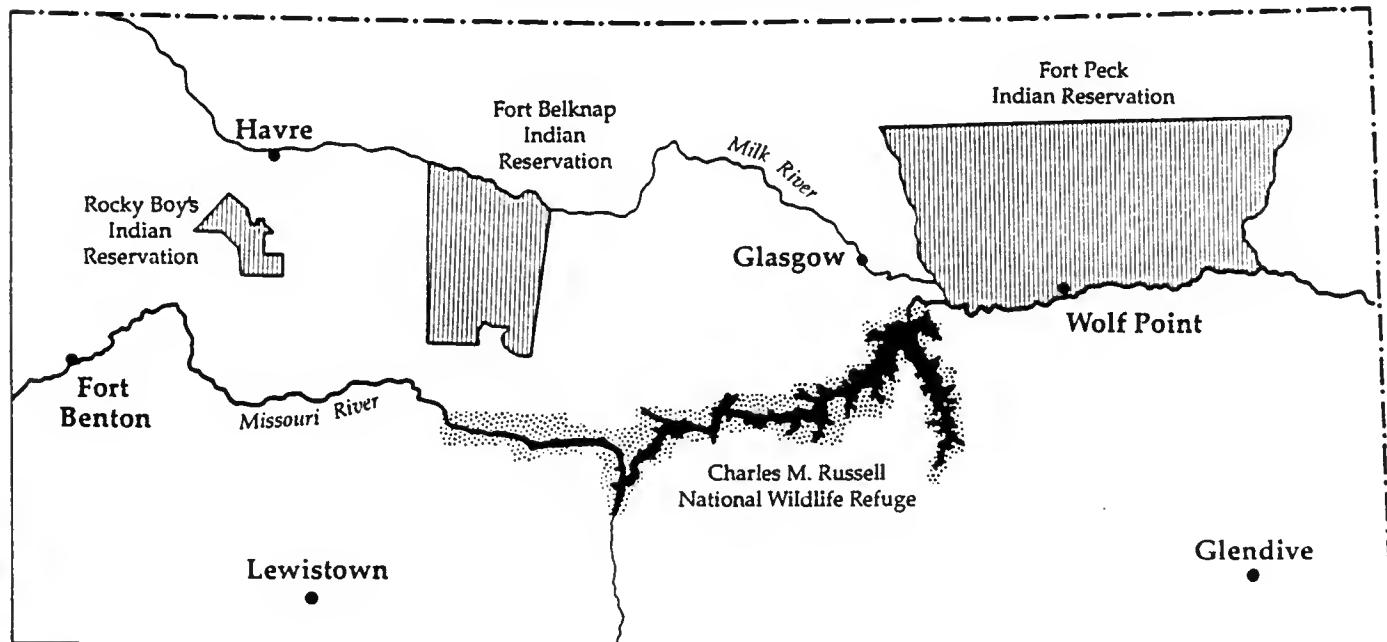
"The large body of water created by the formation of the Fort Peck Reservoir provides possibilities seldom if ever exceeded for recreational usage..."

"The principal unfavorable aspects of the reservoir area with relation to recreational use include the uncertainty regarding future fluctuations of the water surface level, lack of adequate all-weather access roads,..."

"... The People of the region have exhibited a continuing intense interest in recreational development plans."

The Fort Peck Interagency Council (now the Fort Peck Advisory Council) was created in 1959. Improving road access and recreational facilities have always been high priorities for the council.

Missouri River Country



With the passage of the federal Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, regional outdoor recreational planning identified "...the need for paved access roads and economic development of recreation... tied to a quality fishery..." as priorities for the Fort Peck area. In 1986, Congress added recreation as a purpose of the Fort Peck project.

Testimony in Glasgow during the Governor's Forums on Montanans Outdoors in 1986 stated...

- Fort Peck is the key to Eastern Montana recreation and tourism. It should be a recreational center and tourism should be expanded.
- Tourism depends upon developing the recreation "supply," i.e., Fort Peck... all-weather roads, boat access, camp sites, signs, trees, gas pumps...
- Amend Fort Peck charter to include recreation as a project purpose (which was done by Congress in 1986).
- Adopt strategies to provide adequate funding, develop public/private partnerships...
- State government should provide leadership and policy development.

In November 1990, the Fort Peck Advisory Council's Recreation Committee, in its recommendations for a new Fort Peck Lake Master Plan, emphasized the lake's importance to the recreational economy and the area's quality of life. It recommended that the Corps of Engineers take the lead in recreational development and management. The Corps has done so in other states. This is especially appropriate in Montana, because Montana does not enjoy the other benefits that Fort Peck provides to downstream states: flood control, navigation, municipal and industrial water and irrigation.

The people of Eastern Montana have been remarkably patient. Some individuals have been working more than 30 years to find ways to meet the most basic facility and access needs.

Ongoing Initiatives

To improve the management of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River, the State of Montana is

currently engaged in a variety of initiatives at several levels. The State of Montana, in cooperation with the states of North and South Dakota, filed a lawsuit in February 1991 against the Corps of Engineers to clarify the priorities of water use in the Missouri River Basin. The upper basin states argue that recreation, fish, and wildlife should be considered primary uses of the river along with navigation, hydroelectric power, irrigation, and municipal water supply. Historically, the Corps has considered recreation, fish, and wildlife as secondary uses of the river, which has threatened these values in the basin states. The trial is scheduled to begin in September 1992, but the Corps initiated negotiations in January 1992 to settle the lawsuit. The negotiations are ongoing.

The State of Montana is also an active participant in the Missouri Basin States Association (MBSA). MBSA is an organization of Governor-appointed officials from the 10 basin states; one representative from the 20-plus Indian tribes in the basin; and federal agencies with management responsibilities in the basin. MBSA serves as the only ongoing forum for high-level policy officials to come together and try to resolve issues related to the operation of the main stem of the Missouri River. MBSA is currently focusing on the review and update of the Corps' Master Manual and the Annual Operating Plan for the main stem.

"Montana has not had its fair share of water. We need it and we're going to get it."

Glenn Marx

The Master Manual is the administrative framework created by the Corps that spells out how the main stem of the Missouri River is to be operated. It is based on the Flood Control Act of 1944 and outlines the priorities of water use within the basin and the operating requirements for the six main-stem dams and reservoirs.

The Master Manual was initially prepared in 1960. It was last reviewed and updated in 1978. Since

that time, the social, economic, and environmental circumstances in the Missouri River Basin have changed, and the current Master Manual does not reflect these contemporary values. The ongoing review and update of the Master Manual will hopefully improve the benefits provided by the Missouri River to Montana. The State of Montana is committed to increasing and maintaining the level of Fort Peck Lake, and to reducing bank erosion in the river below Fort Peck Dam. The review and update of the Master Manual is scheduled to be complete by December 1993.

"The lawsuit is not an upper basin versus a lower basin confrontation. The premise of the lawsuit is that the Corps is not operating the Missouri River system to the benefit of all the interests in the basin. We need to update our thinking about the operation of the system to benefit both upper and lower basin interests. We are not asking for more than our fair share. We are asking for equity."

Karen Barclay

The Annual Operating Plan (AOP) is the annual guideline for operating the main stem of the Missouri River. It is based on the priorities of water use presented in the Master Manual. Historically, the Corps has developed the AOP with very little input from the affected states and other interests. Based on a recommendation from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, which was supported by MBSA, the basin states were consulted early on in the development of the AOP for 1992. While Montana is not satisfied with the results of the recent MBSA negotiations, which were adopted by the Corps for the 1992 AOP, it agrees that the process of developing the AOP is significantly improved.

The State of Montana is also working at a more local level to improve the management of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River. The Fort Peck Advisory Council, a broad-based coalition of interests around Fort Peck Lake, promotes the development and use of the lake as a major recreational resource. The Council is currently very active in the review and update of the Fort Peck Lake Management Plan.

The Missouri River Development Group is a broad-based coalition of interests along the Missouri River from just below Fort Peck Dam to the North Dakota border. The mission of the Group is to promote economic development in the region. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has worked with the Group to secure congressional funding for a streambank stabilization project along the river. The departments of Natural Resources and Conservation and Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Corps of Engineers are also working with the Group to develop a recreational development strategy for the lower Missouri River.

In addition to all these ongoing initiatives, several other opportunities exist for improving economic development and resource management in the region. The Wild and Scenic section of the Missouri River and the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge provide unique resources for attracting tourists. The national visibility of Fort Peck Lake's fishery resource continues to increase. The Bureau of Land Management's Recreation 2000, Watchable Wildlife, and Backcountry Byways programs provide the foundation for a variety of public/private partnerships. The Missouri River Country tourism promotion activities have increased the number of visitors to the area. Finally, the Fort Peck Indian tribes and the state's political leadership are committed to improving the quality of life in the area.

The Governor's Roundtable

In light of all these activities, Governor Stan Stephens convened a Roundtable on Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River on September 5, 1991. One of the objectives of the Roundtable was to help coordinate and focus these ongoing initia-

tives. However, the primary purpose of the Roundtable was to provide an opportunity for all affected interests to shape an agenda for the future of the Missouri River Country.

While the Roundtable focused on Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River, it also addressed broader issues of local and regional economic development, tourism, and resource management. More than 100 people from the Missouri River Country participated in the Roundtable, including Senator Conrad Burns, several state legislators, native Americans, farmers and ranchers, fishermen and recreationists, local businesses, and the media (see Appendix A).

"In 1990, non-resident expenditures in the region totalled 18 million dollars..."

We can bring more people to the area and triple that amount. But when tourists come here, we have got to have the facilities developed—access roads, campgrounds, marinas, and so on... There will be many jobs created as we continue to promote this area."

Diane Brandt

The Roundtable began with opening statements by Governor Stan Stephens and Senator Conrad Burns. Then, in an attempt to identify the major issues and concerns related to Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River, Glenn Marx of the Governor's Office facilitated an open discussion with a broad-based panel and the audience. The panel included Don Pfau (Fort Peck Advisory Council), Doug Smith (Missouri River Development Group), Larry Wetsit (Fort Peck Indian Reservation), Diane Brandt (Governor's Tourism Advisory Council), Colonel Stewart Bornhoft (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Don Hyppa (Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks), and Karen Barclay (Department of Natural Resources and Conservation). The panel discussion was lively, entertaining, and productive.

During the afternoon, the participants of the Roundtable broke up into seven groups with a cross-section of interests. Each group focused on three questions: What is your vision for the future of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River? What are the priorities for improving the management of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River? How should we achieve the vision and priorities—that is, what strategies are needed? After two hours of work, each group presented its findings (see Appendix B). The major visions, priorities, and strategies are outlined below.

Visions

The Governor's Roundtable produced several visions of the future for Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River. The vision statement of one group, however, is an excellent summary of the visions articulated by other participants:

"Protect and enhance the natural resources of the river and lake to optimize multiple recreational and other economic development opportunities."

This statement appears to capture the dreams and aspirations of the people who reside in the Missouri River Country. These people want to protect the quality of life and the natural environment that makes the region such a special place in which to live and work. However, they are also interested in promoting economic development, including recreation, tourism, and agriculture.

"The current use levels of the lake's facilities do not reflect its use potential, but rather the low and unstable lake levels; the result of the Corp's outdated management of the water resources in the Missouri River basin."

Sport Fishing Institute

"The Missouri River Development Group envisions a river below Fort Peck dam that supports wildlife, recreation, irrigation, and other uses..."

The major stumbling block is that the river's banks erode... Five million tons of silt go by Culbertson every year... The major cause of bank erosion is varied streamflows, and that is because Fort Peck is used for peak power generation... In the Master Manual, we would like the Corps to look at what happens when you raise the river up and down for power generation... There would not be a need for expensive streambank stabilization structures if the river were kept at a more constant level."

Buzz Mattelin

This vision statement is supported by a variety of visions from other participants. These visions include:

- Increase, stabilize, and maintain the level of Fort Peck Lake
- Maintain a minimum and stable instream flow in the Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam
- Establish state control of the Missouri River in Montana
- Provide more access roads to Fort Peck Lake
- Stabilize and prevent streambank erosion along the Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam
- Develop and promote a variety of recreational opportunities at Fort Peck Lake, including cabin sites, interpretive centers, fishing tournaments, hunting, snowmobiling, marinas, campgrounds
- Create a "destination spot" for tourists

- Protect the quality of life and natural environment of the Missouri River Country
- Provide more water for agricultural irrigation
- Develop a comprehensive plan for the Missouri River Country

Priorities

In addition to identifying a vision for the future of the Missouri River Country, Roundtable participants also identified priorities for improving the management of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River. While many of the priorities listed below are similar to the vision statements, the list of priorities helps distinguish the region's immediate needs from long-term goals. The following list of priorities is not in any order, but reflects, as a group, the highest priorities of the region.

"Montana has relied on the federal government and other agencies to achieve our goals. We need to develop our own 'master plan' for the region and use federal and state agencies, where appropriate, to achieve our goals."

Ken Colter

- Maintain a stable and constant lake level and river flow
- Improve recreational access, facilities, and tourism promotion
- Improve fishing habitat in both the lake and river
- Develop irrigation
- Stabilize streambanks to reduce erosion
- Develop a coordinated, regional economic development/resource management plan

Strategies

How will the visions and priorities previously outlined become a reality? The Roundtable participants were asked this question and generated several new strategies. They also supported ongoing efforts such as the litigation, review of the Master Manual, update of the Fort Peck Lake management plan, and several local initiatives.

"Montana does not have a good, unified, comprehensive plan... We need to broaden our thinking beyond Fort Peck Lake and what the Corps can do, and focus on how we can best develop the resources of the entire region through public/private partnerships."

Don Hyppa

By the end of the Roundtable dialogue, there was a consensus that the creation of some type of regional coordinating body or commission would be the most effective way to achieve the visions and priorities previously outlined. Several participants suggested that the Governor and the legislature should create the coordinating body in the form of a regional commission (similar to the Flathead Basin Commission) to provide both visibility and credibility. The coordinating body would address a broader range of issues and a wider geographical area than the Fort Peck Advisory Council, the Missouri River Development Group, and other local groups, all of which would continue to function. The coordinating body should include representatives of the diversity of interests in the region.

According to the Roundtable participants, the co-ordinating body should develop a comprehensive economic development and resource management plan for the Missouri River Country—roughly from Fort Benton to the North Dakota border. The coordinating body should also help facilitate a variety of the other strategies that emerged during the Roundtable, including:

- Developing a regional economic development and resource management plan
 - Pursuing increased funding in the legislature for parks and recreation development
 - Pursuing federal assistance for multiple purposes, including recreation, irrigation, and municipal development
 - Encouraging private-sector contributions and efforts to help develop the region
 - Establishing and maintaining communication channels with policymakers in Washington, D.C.; state legislators; the Governor's Office; appropriate state agencies; and local communities and development groups
 - Promoting and advertising the Missouri River Country
 - Seeking support from national fish, wildlife, and recreation groups, such as Walleyes Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, and Ducks Unlimited
-

"Don't rely on the Corps to develop a plan... Let's work together to come up with a plan and tell the Corps what we want."

Carl Fourstar

Governor's Strategic Plan

Based on the recommendations of the Roundtable, Governor Stan Stephens is committed to the following strategic plan to improve the management of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River. The plan is a combination of ongoing activities and new initiatives.

Clarify the priorities of water use within the Missouri River Basin.

The State of Montana is committed to the litigation against the Corps of Engineers to clarify the priorities of water use in the basin. Without the legal recognition of recreation, fish, and wildlife as equal beneficial uses of the Missouri River (along with navigation, irrigation, and hydropower), there is minimal hope of encouraging the Corps to increase and maintain the levels of Fort Peck Lake. And, without an adequate and stable lake level, the opportunity to realize the recreational potential of the region quickly diminishes.

Revise and update the Master Manual.

The State of Montana will continue to be intimately involved in the Missouri Basin States Association and other forums where the revision of the Master Manual is being debated. The goal of Montana's participation in the revision of the Master Manual is to seek a fair and equitable policy for operating the river.

Revise and update the Fort Peck Lake Management Plan.

The lake management plan being drafted by the Corps of Engineers must reflect the needs and vision of the people that use and rely on Fort Peck Lake. The citizens of Missouri River Country and the Governor will continue to work with the Corps to assure that the final plan provides positive guidance and recognizes Fort Peck's considerable values and potential.

Develop and promote the recreational resources of the region.

The consensus vision statement recognizes the importance of recreation and tourism to the future economy of the Missouri River Country. However, as pointed out by many of the Roundtable participants, the recreational resources of the area are severely underdeveloped. These resources, including appropriate access roads, campgrounds, marinas, and so on, must be developed through cooperative public/private initiatives. Once developed, the recreational amenities of the area should be widely advertised.

Stabilize streambank erosion.

The operation of Fort Peck Dam to satisfy peak power demands significantly erodes the banks of the lower river. This erosion eliminates wildlife habitat, damages recreation areas, and destroys irrigation pumping equipment. The streambank erosion is costly, both economically and environmentally. Congress, the Corps of Engineers, and other appropriate entities must resolve this problem by either modifying the operation of the dam or funding the construction of structures to stabilize the streambank erosion.

Create a regional coordinating body to develop a comprehensive economic development and resource management plan.

A regional coordinating body should be created by the legislature and appointed by the Governor. The mission of the coordinating body should be based on the consensus vision statement. It should develop a comprehensive economic development and resource management plan for the region, establish priorities for development and conservation, create innovative mechanisms for funding and cost-sharing, and facilitate activities to make the plan become a reality. The coordinating body should work with existing groups, such as the Fort Peck Advisory Council and the Missouri River Development Group.

Appendix A

Roundtable Participants

Diane Brandt	Tourism Ad Council	Buzz Mattelin	Missouri River Dev.
Marty Timmerwilke	Corps of Engineers	John Foster	U.S. FWS
Pete Purvig	Roosevelt Conservation Dist.	Sam Richardson	Corps of Engineers
Dick Iversen	Soil Conservation Service	Harry Swank	Roosevelt Co. Cons. Dist.
Gary Chambers	DFWP	Bob Needham	Montana DFWP
Stan Ozark	KLTZ	Manson Bailey, Jr.	Valley Co. Dev. Council
Iris Allrunner	Billings Gazette	Bertha Mathison	
Lloyd Fleming	Private	Chuck Stalwaker	Fort Buford Hist. Site
David Vader	Corps of Engineers	R.A. Dask	
Dallas O'Connor	Private	Stan Gliko	Western
Mr/Mrs Carl Knutson	Sportsman	H. Hageman	
Ron Miller	DNRC	D.J. Vallard	Courier
Tim Newton	Walleyes Unlimited	Dave Mari	BLM
Chuck Roloff	SCS	Lester Nickels	VCCD
Duane Mitcher		Celia Burk	
David Gregory		Willard Burk	UMLSPC
Swede Hammond	Senator, Valley/Phillips Co.	Dwight Mackay	Sen. Burns St. Diector
Lanny L. Walker	Soil Cons. Service	Cecil Weeding	Self
Sam Waters	Walleyes Unlimited	Kathy McLane	Sen. Burns Rep.
Russ Dunnington	Self	EH Smith	Rancher
Art Warner	DFWP	Rick & Maud Guengi	
Ken Byerly	News - Argus	Eleanor Pratt	Valley Co. Comm.
Chet Worm	Corps of Engineers	Larry Wetset	Fort Peck Tribes
Rob Bray	SCS	Minnie Two Shoes	Great Falls Tribune
Linda Nielsen	BearCub Rep	Steven Lacock	Valley Co. Cons. Dist.
Bob Gilbert	State Rep. H.D. 22	Robert E. Sense	McCone County
Don Pfau	Lewistown CO. FC	Roy Snyder	Corp of Engineers
Jim Rector	Fish, Wildlife & Parks Comm.	Connie Eissinger	McCone County Comm.
Alvin Mathison		Floyd R. Yarger	McCone Weed Dist.
Kelly Buechler	KUMV-TV	Ken Coulter	Council Adv. Comm.
Gene Cowan	Phillips Co. Comm.	Parl Pence	Corp of Engineers
Boone A. Whitmer	Rancher	Mark Casterline	
Marlene Schultz		Kenny Nemitz	Dawson Con. District
Roy C. Jones	DNRC—Glasgow Office	Lillian Nemitz	Dawson Co. Rancher
Mike Carlson	E.P. Rcdp	Maury Graham	2 Rivers Growth
Loren Smith	Self	Steve Bornhoft	Corps of Engineers
Bernard Grenfa	Farm Bureau	Dick Gorton	Corps of Engineers
Glenn Marx	Gov. Stephens Office	Pat Bowen	MSU Ext. Services
Margaret Eissinger		Ernest Bergsagel	State Rep HD 17
Rick Stellfling	Valley Co. Weed District	Doug Smith	Missouri River Dev. Group
Sidney Bird	Frazer Community Council	Ted Schye	State Rep H.D. 18
Jake Schack	Self	Carl Fourstar	Fort Peck Tribes
Dick Werner	Pres., Bank of Montana	Wilmer Zeller	Mayor, Glasgow
Mark Etchart	Etchart Ranch	Karl H. Hinther	
Pat Aruald	Valley County	Jim Liebilt	FWP
Larry Tuiet	Senator	Michael R. Holbert	BLM
Ken Noland	Cong. Ron Marlenee	Kent Larson	McCone Co. Comm.
Shirley Ball	Cabin owners	Darrel Pistorius	BLM
Betty Stone	Glasgow Chamber	Aron King	McCone County
Mark Nelson	Corps of Engineer	Julie Burke	Valley
Ken Holman	Corps of Engineers	Gene Reimche	Valley

Appendix B

Reports from Small Groups

*This appendix summarizes the ideas, as recorded on flip charts,
generated within the seven break-out groups.*

GROUP 1

VISIONS

- To use water in lake for other purposes (i.e., cooling of nuclear plant)
- Self-control (Montana Control) of water—not the users (downstream)
- Keep the dinos at home—build interpretive centers for residents and visitors
- A natural river in a natural setting still providing needs of agriculture, municipal, and recreation
- Create a fishing mecca
- Release water naturally and not to downstream demands; that is, release more in the spring and less in late summer
- Create a new minimum pool for lake
- More priority for agricultural irrigation
- Create a tourist paradise
- Have upscale resort for rich and famous
- Have stability of water in lake
- Develop houseboating
- National media for fishing tournaments
- Advertise regionally and nationally
- Create a third powerhouse
- More shoreline for commercial and residential development
- More roads (access)
- Establish year-round demand—hunting, snowmobiling, fishing
- Create a marine world

PRIORITIES

Top Level Priority

- Access (improved all weather) roads (above and below dam)
- Establish and maintain water levels (above and below dam)

- Get federal, state, and private dollars for improvements (roads, etc.)
- Create greater awareness of fisheries management
- Management of water releases (stability—cities and agriculture)
- Improve facilities - site developments (ramps, toilets)
- Develop irrigation for valley
- Build boat basins for protection

2nd Priority

- Establish concessionaire system—boat rentals, gas, bait, food, drink
- More campsites
- Breakwaters
- Drinking water wells
- Rearing ponds
- More advertising

3rd Priority

- Playground facilities
- Protected swimming areas
- More access sites (undeveloped)
- More trees planted
- More trails
- More shoreline lots
- Dump stations for boats
- Develop nuclear site

STRATEGIES

- Enhance “parks” funding through legislature for possible matching funds
- Inform and educate key decision makers for Master Manual and Master Plan
- Keep Governor involved in litigation effort of Master Manual

- Look for all federal monies that may be available (grants, etc.)
- Do away with Corps of Engineers and create a coop to manage Missouri River system
- Dollars from corporations and private sectors
- Create a sale tax to fund improvements
- Establish peace with lower basin states that recognize Montana as being equal
- Develop effective contingency that can compete with more populated interests
- Increase advertising—use bed tax to promote eastern Montana interests
- Compare benefits and costs of navigation vs. recreation
- Have Governor talk to Sinunu about Fort Peck issues
- Communicate with legislatures on state and federal level
- More news coverage
- Ask for help from national groups and organizations (i.e., Walleye Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, etc.)

GROUP 2

VISIONS

- Developing tourism and recreational facilities (lake and river)
- Destination
- Vegetation control and lake level
- Access
- Controlled development
- Economic development
- Increasing agricultural productivity through irrigation (sugar beets)
- Not water export pipelines (i.e., coal slurry)
- Jobs - stability for rural communities
- Regional development (Fort Benton to border)—variety of opportunity
- Manage for use, not preservation

PRIORITIES

Top Level Priority

- Water level management (increase minimum pool; decrease fluctuations—river and lake)
- Carefully planned shoreline access development
- Fisheries management (part of water level management)
- Improve necessary facilities for camping and recreation (i.e., trails, sanitary facilities, ramps, etc.)
- Promotion

2nd Priority

- No interstate export
- Bank stabilization (i.e., re-regulation-dam)
- Breakwater (Fort Peck marina)
- Fort Peck Lake Management Plans - needs recreation as line item

3rd Priority

- Other all-year recreational development (i.e., snowmobiling)
- Shore vegetation management (lake level management takes care of it)
- Interpretative material

STRATEGIES

- Make recreation a permanent line item in the Fork Peck Lake Budget
- Shared drought impacts between upper and lower basin - minimum pool (MM review)
- Coordinating activities (Governor's committee)
- MRDG - Missouri River Development Group
- Fort Peck Group
- Two Rivers Association
- DNRC, Corps
- Congressionals
- RC&Ds
- Highways - Highway Department
- local development groups

GROUP 3

VISIONS*

- Increased visitation (V,II)
- Fishing/hunting based
- Improve those resources and promote to draw nonresidents
- Facilities to support fishing and hunting (V,III)
- Get past nitpicking and scrabbling and get to work—too many regulations and new requirements (lessen) (S)
- Corps should facilitate cabin sites instead of just regulating (S)
- Corps should “harvest pride” of cabin owners (S,I)
- Stabilize lake level (V,II)
- Higher minimum pool (V,I)
- Stable river ranks below dam (V,P,III)
- Well managed multiple use (V,P,II)
- Irrigation development (V,II)
- Dam and reservoir should be turned over to state (S,I)
- Better road access to lake—paved, year round (V,I)
- Continued demand for fishery—need to support users (V,II)
- Roads in state highway secondary system (S,III)
- Need group to continue to push for improvements (S,P,I)
- Towns below Fort Peck need water... maintain instream flows... this determines the need for storage minimums in Fort Peck (S,II)
- Must respect “release on demand” water rights—what are they?
- Facilities to provide a quality recreational experience—both developed and primitive (S,I)
- Facilities outside corps area also should be provided (V,S,II)

- Good water quality and habitat (water fowl) (V,I)
- MCT plan should increase economy of area (V,I)
- Maintain reasonable pool level so Marias can make sound investment of users will have discussed opportunities (S,I)
- Corps should allow reasonable growth of opportunities—recreation areas, cabin sites, etc. (Rock Creek!) (V,I)
- Local governments cooperate inroad construction and maintenance—road from highway to recreation area is gravel only (S,I)
- 3-4 good marina operations Corps should not inherit (v,I)
- Use of state parks boat gas monies on other boating sites to encourage partnerships (S,I)
- Signage and interpretation to direct users (S,I)
- More family related activities (watchable wildlife, Lewis & Clark, environment and lake interpretation) (V,I)
- More private development of facilities (V,I)
- Construct rearing pond facility to support Fort Peck walleye (S,I)
- Cost sharing including user fees to provide funding (state/federal/private) (S,I)
- Need a cooperative funding strategy (S,I)
- One entity should manage recreation sites on Fort Peck (S,I)

PRIORITIES

- Construct rearing ponds for sport fishing (III)
- Maintain multiple use of lake/Corps/CMR, instead of bill that limits use) (IIIIII)
- Improve access/facilities (IIIIII)
- Establish, stabilize, maintain, and manage water levels (IIIIII)

* After listing items, the group determined whether each was actually a vision (V), priority (P), or strategy (S). Each (I) indicates that another person in the group had a similar item.

- Cooperative rather than adversary relationship with Corps (II)
- Encourage development of facilities by both Corps and private (III)
- Downstream recreation/four irrigation/economic development (II)
- Manage flows to stabilize streambanks below dam (I)
- Develop a marketing strategy (promotion) (I)
- Need an overall plan (just raising water level not enough) (II)
- Commitment to maintain and/or enhance sport fishery (I)

- Preserve essentially "wild" nature of reservoir (I)
- Secure funding (I)

STRATEGIES

- Assign responsibility/deadline
- Get federal "access to lakes" money
- Corps upgrade lake recreation facilities
- State leased sites should be improved by state
- Encourage cooperative efforts—federal/state/local/private
- Encourage CRMP (area) planning—establish short and long-term goals

SUMMARY

VISIONS

- Protect and enhance the natural resources of the river and lake to optimize multiple recreational and other economic development opportunities

TOP PRIORITIES

- Maintain multiple use of lake, river, CMR, etc.
- Stabilize and maintain adequate water levels

- Improve access/facilities
- Construction of fish propagation facilities for sport fish, i.e., rearing ponds
- Downstream recreation/irrigation and economic development
- Develop an overall coordinated region resource management plan
- Establish cooperative rather than adversarial relationships between federal agencies and others

GROUP 4

VISIONS

- More power development, recreation, tourism, and irrigation
- Draw plan through local people with assistance from state and federal agencies
- Repetitive tourism—multi-use planning with drought impact consideration
- Water level of Fort Peck “constant”, road development, cabin site development at acceptable sites
- Economic development with resource conservation
- Economically viable remotely rural environment with the river, reservoir, land and people as the base
- Remotely rural with limited development to enhance access. Maintain integrity of natural beauty of Missouri Breaks
- Comprehensive plan for Missouri River country, identify unique natural resources of national importance, facilities for tourism and make time plan for area promotion and utilization
- Comprehensive plan from Fort Benton to Fort Union

PRIORITIES

1st Priority

- Tourist development

- Improve access roads and sites (recreation accommodations)

Comprehensive Plan

- Improve fishing habitat
- Stabilize Fort Peck pool levels
- Stabilize instream flows before dam

2nd Priority

- Identify funding sources
- Coordinate federal, state, and local agencies
- Master manual revisions

STRATEGIES

- Local committee representing all interests
- Define and prioritize needs, estimate costs, find funding—be creative and aggressive
- Work together
- Recognize equal rights of water use
- Evaluation and modification of plan
- Evaluate existing processes and select best for local needs and also evaluate existing institutional structures

SUMMARY

VISIONS

- Responsible economic development of natural resources
- Area: Fort Benton to Fort Union and cooperate with North Dakota groups

STRATEGIES

- Grass roots organizations
- Appropriate local, state, and federal assistance to grass roots organizations
- Define institutional structure and funding to develop the comprehensive plan (e.g., Regional Flathead Basin Commission)
- Implement plan in phases and find funding
- Evaluate plan and progress ... for potential modification

PRIORITIES

- Appropriate control and management of river and tributaries for a diversified economy
- Coordinate federal, state, and local agencies with private sector

GROUP 5

VISIONS

- Maintain Fort Peck water level at elevation everyone can live with (i.e., tributary areas, bays)
- More cabin sites
- Improve roads (Fort Peck area)
- Bank stabilization (rip rap, etc.) Missouri River below dam
- Recreational use of water should be recognized as a beneficial use—i.e., with water right associated with it
- Reasons for cabin road development:
- With developed areas follows use, and would lead to more political support for Fort Peck area from both additional residents and non-residents
- Better variety of fish species in Fort Peck Reservoir
- Less restrictions on lakeshore development (cabins, road access)
- A good, well-financed marina is needed at Fort Peck associated lodging facilities (near lake)
- Develop a fish hatchery
- Need trees—develop a tree planting program around the lake
- Eliminate selected portions of the CM Russell Wilderness area
- Will future plans address the potential of a climate change

PRIORITIES

- Recognize the recreational value of water in the lake (higher minimum pool elevation)
- Increase cooperation with state and federal agencies
- Establish a Board representing varied local interests regarding Fort Peck and Missouri River management (consist of representatives of each county; include North Dakota?; also upstream counties)
- Need longer term, dependable plans from COE—so that firm investments can be made in recreation and other permanent facilities
- Financing—need to create a plan or method to generate funding for projects
- Bank stabilization—Missouri River

STRATEGIES

- Establish a Board (by the Legislature) to develop the vision of the area and establish
 - management policies
 - priorities
 - funding
- Provide funding for the Board

GROUP 6

VISIONS

- Potable drinking water
- Improved roads access
- Stabilize stream bank
- Constant water level in lake
- Improved camping and picnic
- New cabin sites
- Common plan (federal, state, local) etc.

- Low level dams on river
- New improved irrigation projects
- Strategic location of sites - final destination point
- River and lake level stabilization would solve several visions
- Corps has responsibility for regulation of river's flow levels
- Identify inequities of Fort Peck
- Keep Eastern Montana Coal Tax in eastern Montana

GROUP 7-8

VISIONS

- Equalization of priorities
- Major tourism area
- Fewer people on land; need for industry development
- Potential problems, i.e., wetlands on river bottom
- Increase demand for water—sugar beets, coal fired plant, Dryer Brothers
- Increase recreation
- Retirement area
- Corps will give control of Missouri water to state
- Corps needs to recognize recreation as of great importance
- Further economic development - irrigation
- Streambank stability needed, i.e., control releases
- Efficient hydropower & a safe dam; wide range of recreational opportunities for many diverse groups
- Combination of developed and underdeveloped areas
- Flood control, power, water storage as climatic conditions dictate
- Combinations of lake and river recreation - choice of visitor
- Safe enjoyable visit for everyone
- Minimize negative impacts to hydropower, roads, etc.
- Development of tourism at Fort Peck Reservoir

PRIORITIES

- Stable lake levels
- Streambank stabilization downstream
- Safe harbors and marinas
- Develop facilities for tourists - lake and river
- Develop downstream irrigation projects in state
- Equalize demands on water - lake and river
- Paved roads to major access points on reservoir
- Flood control and water storage
- More advertising of tourist and recreational facilities
- Ratify Fort Peck-Montana water compact

STRATEGIES

- Coordinate local government and municipalities (groups)
- Establish oversight committee to reduce government bureaucracy in permit process (10 and 404)
- Improve communication between federal, state, and local levels (develop spirit of cooperation)
- Obtain development funds - new funding sources
- Cooperative funding efforts between local, state, federal, and private entities
- More local input in decisions affecting area

SUMMARY

VISION

- Equalization of priorities between upper and lower basin states (Missouri River basin users)

- Increase in tourism and recreation - not at expense of present economic bases (agricultural)
- Industrial and irrigation development



